Method and device for milking an animal

FIELD AND BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

5 [0001]   The subject matter of the invention relates to a method for machine-milking an animal such as a cow, where a pulsed vacuum with sequential evacuation and ventilation phases is generated in a teat cup by means of an associated pulsator, and to a pulsator. Although the invention will be described below with reference to an application in the milking of cows, the invention may as well be employed for milking other dairy animals
10 such as goats, sheep, buffaloes, llamas, camels, dromedaries, yaks, etc.

[0002]   Methods and devices where a pulsed vacuum with alternating sequential suction and rest phases is generated in a teat cup of a milking unit to allow machine-milking of animals, are known per se.
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[0003]   In such methods or devices a stimulating phase is performed that is in particular followed by a substantially even, pulsed vacuum generated in the pulse chamber of a teat cup so as to cause that a rubber liner provided in the teat space in the interior of the teat cup to perform[[s]] a pulsating milking movement.
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[0004]   To this end the vacuum means of a suction milking installation comprises a vacuum pump, a vacuum valve, pressure connection lines to the teat cups and a control means for generating valve control pulses. The control means generates a valve opening pulse and a valve closing pulse. The vacuum pump of the installation generates a
25 substantially constant vacuum that approximately corresponds to the pulsation pressure.

[0005]   At specified fixed intervals, the control means generates control signals for opening the valve of the vacuum device so as to build up a substantially abrupt vacuum in the a teat cup gap. Said vacuum is maintained for a specified fixed duration. As is done
30 with vacuum build-up, upon receipt of another control pulse, the pressure in the teat cup gap is abruptly dropped by means of re-evacuating the pulse chamber. This process is repeated consistently continually within a preset pulsation period. Since both pressure